

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

MINUTES of the MEETING **held in the on the Tuesday 13th April, 2021**

(These minutes remain in draft form until approved at the next meeting of the Council)

Parish Councillors Present:

Mr. W. Acland Chairman
Cllrs. Ms. H. Medcraft,
T. Matthews, C. Richardson, N. Snell
J. Smith

County Councillor Present:

R. Boyles & G. Morgan.

District Councillor Present:

Ms. N. Packer & R. Boyles.

The Clerk - Ms. Joanne Rawlings.

Apologies:

B. O'Neill

Standing Declarations of Interest

- (a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllrs. Matthews & Snell.
- (b) Soudley Village Hall – Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Smith.

RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST

Members' were mindful that these items were considered and determined as trustees to the RWT.

1. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2. **MINUTES** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the 13th April, 2021 were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

2.1 **MATTERS ARISING** from the minutes.

2.2 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**
(N/P)

- **Flood Response Measures** FloodSax are an eco-friendly, lightweight and robust flood defence system. They are generally supplied in packs of five and cost around £32 per pack, although bulk buy discounts may be available. They are lightweight and easy to transport. Absorbing up to 22 litres of water per bag, the semi-porous inner liner contains a gelling polymer that absorbs water to expand and become firm in just over 3 minutes. Once activated, FloodSax will remain inflated for at least 7 days, will stay activated for 12 weeks, (if in contact with a liquid), and will not leak. They are designed to mould into doorways, are reusable and have a 10-year shelf life, meaning they last longer than sandbags. They are made with a 9 layer biodegradable polymer crystal pad with natural fibres and other biodegradable contents. Its gelled contents are non-hazardous and non-toxic. FloodSax can be disposed of through regular disposal methods and will decompose over time. In addition, the bags can be cut open and the contents shovelled into gardens or planting mix to help keep the soil moist.
- Hydro snakes are another alternative to sandbags. They weigh only 0.5kg when dry, making them only 10% the weight of traditional sandbags. This makes it a lot easier to put them into position and remove them when needed. When activated by water, these flood barriers increase in weight to provide more stability. Each bag will absorb around 20 litres of water or sewage, weighing around 20kg when full. They will also expand in size, ensuring a tight fit. Like sandbags they can also be stacked on top of each other. They are made from an absorbent polymer inner pulp with a non-woven polypropylene hydrophilic finish exterior and cost around £20 for a pack of 2. Unlike FloodSax, Hydro Snakes are not reusable. To dispose of them they need to be slit open and the contents emptied into the ground. The outer lining can then be sent for disposal.

- **The Levelling Up Fund** The Government has invited local authorities to bid for Government funding, with the Forest of Dean District Council being in the list of 122 authorities with 1st priority status. The last date to submit the bid is 18th June, so projects must be already well advanced in the preparation stage to be considered to be included in the bid. The different projects in the bid must be linked under a common theme and comply with the criteria laid out.
- **The Community Ownership Fund** The UK government has launched a new £150 million Community Ownership Fund to help ensure that communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them. Community groups will be able to bid for up to £250,000 matched-funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses. The first bidding round for the Community Ownership Fund will open by June 2021. A full bidding prospectus will be published alongside this. Local authorities, including parish councils will not be eligible to bid, however Parish councils may play a role in working with community groups looking to submit a bid. Cabinet will decide on 8th April which option or combination of options (to prevent flood water entering a property) to adopt. I believe that Parish Councils were consulted on these options but let me know if you want more information.
- **Homelessness** at their March meeting, Cabinet approved expenditure for measures to prevent homelessness. The funding has been allocated to the Forest of Dean District Council by the government.
- **Reopening and subsidy of Leisure Facilities** Now that the Government have published a 'roadmap' for relaxing restrictions, Freedom Leisure have been able to provide an overview of their re-opening plans for facilities.

Roadmap Step / Earliest Date	Leisure Services permitted
Step 1 / 8 March	Remain Closed
Step 1 / 29 March	Remain Closed
Step 2 / 12 April	Gym & swimming at all sites
Step 3 / 17 May	Restart adult indoor sport at leisure centres Resume indoor Group Exercise programme
Step 4 / 21 June	Removal of legal limits on social contact

(BO'N)

- £30 million in Business support grants have been paid in the last year. We are currently processing the restart grants and businesses will have been informed. We also will be looking at paying out Discretionary Grants, for those not eligible for other grants.
- St White's School. I have no further news on any progress, but I shall be keeping an eye on developments.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

(R/B)

- Not only are libraries re-opening 12 April but they have fully restocked the shelves ready for you to delve in to the UK's top titles. Customers will see a wide range of fiction and non-fiction for children, young people and adults including some old favourites and the works of popular authors that have been recently well-reviewed. Gloucestershire Libraries have also invested in more copies of those books that are in high demand to help reduce the waiting time for available copies.
- The county council has distributed more than £500,000 additional funding to support Gloucestershire care homes in the controlling the spread of Coronavirus.
- Gloucestershire County Council has been awarded £1.5m of new grant funding for a programme of holiday activities and food for schoolchildren eligible for Free School Meals. The programme will run for a total of six weeks across the next financial year – one week at Easter, four during the summer holidays, and one at Christmas – and will include four hours of support, and a hot meal, four days each week. It will be open to all families who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals during term time.

- Gloucestershire gets £1.35million boost for rural buses. Gloucestershire County Council has successfully bid for £1,352,000 towards improved rural transport in two pilot areas. The Forest of Dean and the North Cotswolds will benefit from bespoke minibus services as part of a pilot to bring affordable public transport to some of the most rural areas of the county. The cash comes from the Department for Transport's £20million Rural Mobility Fund, designed to support the Government's National Bus Strategy announced yesterday (15 March). Gloucestershire is one of 17 successful trial areas which have been granted funding to improve rural transport.
- A report being presented to cabinet next week shows a projected underspend of around £1.79 million in the 2020/21 financial year, which will be allocated into the following areas: £1 million to create a 'Gloucestershire Restart Fund', which will allow for a range of activities to help the county get back to normal as quickly as possible following the COVID-19 pandemic. Further details of this scheme will be announced at a later date. £220,000 to the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to fund 500 new charging points around the county, to continue ongoing efforts to tackle climate change. It is estimated there are currently in the region of 50 to 60 public charging points in the county and these extra ones will aim to encourage greater take-up of electric vehicles. A £10,000 increase per councillor for Highways Local schemes in 2021/22, totalling £530,000. The initiative will then provide each councillor with £30,000 to fund local works, including resurfacing, road safety and drainage repairs.

(G/M)

- New VAS signs now erected at Cinderford Bridge commissioned and activated.
- I am continuing to liaise with Forestry England the County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council with regard the Flooding issues along the Cinderford Brook, these Organisations are looking at how they can work more closely with each other to solve these issues as climate change continue to produce more extreme weather events.

2.3 **PLANNING** – completed schedule is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

2.4 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Following report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for payment totalling £9328.25, this figure being inclusive of confidential expenditure.

2.5 **ViewPoint** – The Council discussed agreed that Viewpoint will go back to being monthly.

2.6 Ruspidge Hall Parish Meetings – Agreed for Cllr Tony Matthews & Norman Snell to discuss having the top Hall for Parish Meetings at Hall Committee AGM.

2.7 Railway Rd, Cullimore Bridge Dog Waste Bin – Parish Council Agreed to install new dog waste bin on Cullimore Bridge.

CORRESPONDENCE

2.7 The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:

a) GCC – recycling centres set to move to summer hours & Flood Defence Measures (fwded)

2.8 **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Soudley Hall** at 7.00pm **Tuesday, 11th May, 2021.**

The agenda deadline is **Monday, 3rd May, 2021.**

2.9 **Exclusion of the Press and the Public** - the council **RESOLVED** that for any remaining business of a confidential nature the press and the public should be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 10.xi (2020).

2.10 The meeting closed at 7.25p.m.

Signed: Chair. Dated:

